

Beef Benchmarking Meeting

Last Thursday we held our Beef Benchmarking meeting which was a great success. It was very interesting to collate all your data and reflect on the year in order to set new targets for this spring calving period. We are hoping that we can continue to build on this data set and gather more accurate data so we can demonstrate trends in individual/group(s) data. So, we can find ways to increase margins and performance across your herds.

Thank you to everyone who supplied data. You should all now have received a copy of the graphs along with your assigned letter so please check your emails.



MSD Flock Check 2024



MSD are running their annual Flock Check Bloods for antibodies for Toxoplasma and Enzootic abortions in ewes. These bloods should be targeted at 6 to 8 ewes post lambing who have aborted or are barren at lambing. The scheme is available from 1st February until 30th June 2024 and is open for flocks of 100 or more breeding ewes and the cost of lab testing is covered. Please mark any suitable ewes at lambing time and give us a call to discuss/arrange bloods.

A reminder on what to do if abortions occur:

- Practice extremely good personal hygiene
- All aborting ewes should be immediately separated for at least three weeks (time for vaginal discharge to cease)
- Keep aborted fetuses and any placenta to send off. Give us a call.
- Ill ewes should be treated with antibiotics (generally Trymox LA) and anti-inflammatories (Emdocam) and fluids if necessary. Always call to check if unsure.
- Mark any ewes for blood sampling later
- Do not foster any ewe lambs you intend to keep as replacements onto aborted ewes.
- Consider vaccination for the following year - here bloods/tests on aborted lambs can identify the problem in your flock and guide vaccination accordingly.

Coccidiosis

Due to the ongoing wet weather, we are starting to see cases of coccidiosis.



Coccidiosis is caused by a parasite that usually infects 3 weeks to 6-month-old calves and 4 to 6 weeks old lambs. Clinical signs of disease include scour, which is usually bloody, dehydration, rapid weight loss, straining to defecate (sometimes with rectal prolapse as a result) and occasionally death. Subclinical signs show reduced appetite, weight loss, reduction in growth rate and a dull appearance. Clinical signs are usually suggestive of disease, but a faecal egg count is the best way of reaching a definite diagnosis. However, scouring can happen before coccidial oocysts are shed and continue after shedding has ceased. By pooling samples taken from scouring and non-scouring animals there is more chance of finding coccidia oocysts.

Treatment involves using the coccidiocidal drench Tolracol as well as oral/intravenous fluid therapy depending on severity and often antibiotics/anti-inflammatories. Alternatively, an in-feed coccidiostat (decoquinate) – in combined mineral buckets or in feed can be used to suppress the infection.

Nematodirus

<https://www.scops.org.uk/forecasts/nematodirus-forecast/>

Nematodirus caused by the *Nematodirus battus* worm strikes very quickly with little or no warning. Each year we diagnose it as the cause of high mortality rates as well as stunting the growth of other susceptible lambs. Faecal egg counts (in this instance!) are not reliable as the damage is done by large numbers of immature larvae that are not producing eggs.

We are entering a risk period for Nematodirus in this area.

- Lambs grazing pasture that carried lambs' last spring
- Generally, happens in lambs aged 6-12 weeks old - old enough to be eating significant amounts of grass but might be younger if ewes are not milking well.
- Concurrent challenges with coccidiosis
- Lambs under stress - triplets, fostered, older or younger ewes.
- !! A sudden cold snap followed by a period of warm weather!!

If possible: avoid infection. Move your at-risk lambs to a low-risk pastures: pastures not grazed by lambs' last spring. If this is not possible the recommendation is to use a white wormer. Please check if worming has been effective by taking a FEC 7-10 days post treatment because although white wormer is usually highly effective against Nematodirus cases of resistance have still been reported. It is also important to remember that you might need to treat lambs more than once depending on the spread of ages in a group and weather conditions.

It is important to bear in mind that before they can hatch eggs need to undergo a period of cold weather followed by warmer temperatures of 10 degrees or more. If these conditions happen over a short period of time like the weather, we've been recently happening this triggers a mass hatch. Couple this with lambs that are in the susceptible age bracket and huge problems will happen.

Give us a call if you have any questions/ need advice on how best to prevent this being an issue this springtime.

Products for Calving

Dopram V

We have a product in stock which can be used immediately after a difficult calving or section to stimulate calves to begin breathing. Give us a call to discuss whether it would be beneficial for you to have some on hand.

Immucol Platinum Colostrum

Just a reminder that we stock Immucol Platinum Colostrum. A 2016 study found that Immucol Platinum gave the highest IgG level per recommended feed of the 14 UK available colostrum supplements. With all the focus now on ensuring lambs get the best start as Spectam is now discontinued its important not to forget about your calves!

Sensiblex

Sensiblex is a drug which you can administer by intramuscular infection to promote dilation of the soft tissues of the birth canal and cervix around the time of calving and lambing. This is particularly useful for heifers who have not slackened (10ml) or ewes with ring womb (5ml) in addition to calcium. It generally takes about 15-30 minutes to have an effect.

Mederantil

We have started to use our new product Mederantil with great success on farm. This injection must be given by intravenous injection and stimulates the hunger centre in the brain of the calf and makes it start sucking. Please let us know if you have a calf that needs repeatedly tubing.

Nimrod Red Start Tubes

Nimrod Red Start is recommended for use following a difficult delivery or following caesarean section and contains five ingredients that will reduce the mortality rate in the new-born lamb/calf:

- Caffeine and Glucose to stimulate breathing and to correct low blood-glucose concentrations.
- Medium-chain fatty acids to offer a readily available energy source for the new-born animal. Providing these fatty acids allows glucose to be freed up for essential use in the brain.
- Vitamin A to help combat increased mortality rates associated with vitamin-A deficiency.
- Selenium to improve absorption of antibodies (IgG) in colostrum.

Nimrod Red Start can be given immediately after birth to provide energy to encourage the new-born to get up and begin to suck colostrum. Lambing's: ¼ of a tube of Nimrod Red Start immediately after birth and this can be repeated 6-8 hours later. Calving's: 1 full tube as soon as possible after calving; this can be repeated the next day if necessary.

Please get in touch if you have any questions/would like to purchase Nimrod Red Start - £5.35/tube, £32.11/box of 6

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